

Appl. No. 10/539,690
Amtd. Dated July 24, 2006
Reply to Office Action of May 3, 2006

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REMARKS

Claims 1 to 18 are currently pending in the present application. Applicants affirm that the subject matter of claims 1 to 18 was commonly owned at the time the inventions covered therein were made.

Claim 1 is amended herein. Claim 12 is cancelled. No new matter has been added by the amendments.

Claims 1 to 9 and 14 to 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. US 6,096,666 to Jachimowicz. et al. (hereinafter "Jachimowicz").

Applicants respectfully submit that Jachimowicz does not expressly or inherently disclose all of the elements set forth in independent claim 1, as amended. Thus, Jachimowicz does not anticipate claim 1 or claims 2 to 9 and 14 to 18, which depend directly or indirectly therefrom.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of now cancelled claim 12. Accordingly, claim 1 now claims:

An electro-optic filament or fibre (10) comprising an elongate core (11) within a volume (12) of polarisable material, and an outer member (13) overlying the said volume, wherein:

(i) the core (11) and the outer member (13) are electrically conducting and respectively connectable to electrical potentials to generate a field (14) therebetween; and

(ii) the polarisable material (12) exhibits an optical effect when subjected to a said field (14) and/or a change in a said field, the said optical effect being visible or otherwise optically detectable externally of the filament or fibre (10),

wherein the resistance of the outer member (13) is inhomogeneous.

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As suggested by the Action, Jachimowicz fails to disclose or reasonably suggest a filament or fibre wherein the resistance of the outer member is inhomogeneous, as now claimed in claim 1. The presence of an inhomogeneous outer member presents advantages not appreciated by the prior art. Specifically, the presence of an inhomogeneous outer member advantageously allows for variability of the optical effects from place to place along the filament or fibre. In particular, such inhomogeneity of the resistance of the outer member allows for the provision of pixels along the filament or fibre, at electrically addressable locations. Such features facilitate the generation of recognisable images.

Accordingly, for at least this reason, independent claim 1 is now patentable over Jachimowicz. Since claims 2 to 9 and 14 to 18 depend from claim 1 and provide further features thereto, claims 2 to 9 and 14 to 18 are distinguishable over Jachimowicz for at least the reasons discussed. Accordingly, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) of claims 1 and claims 2 to 9 and 14 to 18 should be withdrawn and claims 1 and claims 2 to 9 and 14 to 18 should be allowed.

Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected by the Action under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Jachimowicz. Claims 10 and 11 depend indirectly from claim 1. As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to claim an electro-optic filament or fibre (10) comprising an elongate core (11) within a volume (12) of polarisable material, and an outer member (13) overlying the said volume, wherein: (i) the core (11) and the outer member (13) are electrically conducting and respectively connectable to electrical potentials to generate a field (14) therebetween; and wherein the resistance of the outer member (13) is inhomogeneous. As also discussed, the Action states that Jachimowicz fails to disclose or reasonably suggest a filament or fibre wherein the resistance of the outer member is inhomogeneous, as now claimed in claim 1.

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In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 10 and 11, depending from claim 1, are patentable over Jachimowicz for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 1. Allowance of claims 10 and 11 is therefore respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the specification, the drawings and all claims presented in this application are currently in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and that this application be passed to allowance.

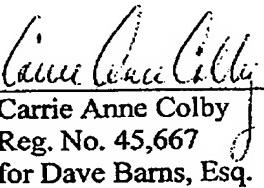
Should any changes to the claims and/or specification be deemed necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned to discuss the same.

Applicants' representative believes that this response is being filed in a timely manner. In the event that any extension and/or fee is required for the entry of this amendment the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge said fee to Deposit Account No. 14-1270. An early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

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If the Examiner should have any questions concerning this communication or feels that an interview would be helpful, the Examiner is requested to call David Barnes, Esq., Intellectual Property Counsel, Philips North America Corporation at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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